

Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 ISO-00 EB-07 USIA-15 /031 W

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R 021445Z JUB76

FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2266

INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

UNCLAS DURBAN 0304

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: BEXP, SF

SUBJECT: IOWA IOGA TRADE MISSION

REF: STATE 157317

1. BASED ON CANVASS OF LOCAL BUSINESSMEN, CONGEN BELIEVES PROSPECTS FOR MISSION IN DURBAN DO NOT APPEAR TOO OPTIMISTIC.

2. AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY: EXPERTS POINT OUT THAT THE ONLY MAJOR CROP IN COASTAL BELT IS SUGAR CANE, REQUIRING SPECIALIZED MACHINERY. GENERAL AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY NOT IN GREAT DEMAND. GENERAL FARMING PRACTISED IN MOST OF THE BALANCE OF THE PROVINCE, BUT HERE TRADE SOURCES POINT OUT THAT VIRTUALLY ALL FIRMS ACTIVE IN INLAND NATAL ARE BRANCHES OF COMPANIES WITH HEAD OFFICES ELSEWHERE, ESPECIALLY JOHANNESBURG, AND FIRMS WILL THEREFORE BE ABLE TO CONTACT MISSION THERE. THE ONE MAJOR AGRICULTURAL MACHINERY DISTRIBUTOR BASED IN DURBAN (G. NORTH & SON) POINTS OUT IT HAS BRANCHES IN BOTH JOHANNESBURG AND CAPE TOWN AND, WHILE INTERESTED IN MEETING WITH MISSION, WILL BE HAPPY TO DO SO IN EITHER OR BOTH OF THESE CITIES IF DURBAN NOT ON ITINERARY.

3. FOOD PROCESSING AND PACKAGING EQUIP: POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS FOR THESE PRODUCTS FAIRLY WELL REPRESENTED IN NATAL (ESPECIALLY DURBAN AND PIETERMARITZBURG) AND WE WOULD EXPECT FAIRLY WIDE INTEREST. AGAIN, HOWEVER, SEVERAL OF THE MAJOR

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COMPANIES ARE SUBSIDIARIES OR BRANCHES OF GROUPS BASED NEAR JOHANNESBURG.

4. CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT: CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY SEEMS TO BE IN MIDST OF A SLUMP, WHICH MANY EXPERTS BELIEVE WILL WORSEN BEFORE IT IMPROVES. THUS, THIS MAY NOT BE THE BEST TIME TO MARKET CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA. INsofar AS DURBAN IS CONCERNED, THE MAJORITY OF LARGE PROJECTS ARE HANDLED BY THE LOCAL BRANCHES OF A FEW MAJOR COMPANIES, AGAIN MAINLY BASED ON THE WITWATERSRAND. THERE ARE NUMEROUS DURBAN-BASED CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES, MANY OF WHOM WOULD NO DOUBT BE INTERESTED IN INTERVIEWING THE MISSION, BUT THE MAJORITY OF THESE ARE COMPARATIVELY SMALL COMPANIES.
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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a

*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 02 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976DURBAN00304
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: n/a
Errors: n/a
Film Number: D760258-0025
From: DURBAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t197607102/aaaagiag.tel
Line Count: 81
Locator: TEXT ON MICROFILM, TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION COME
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 157317
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: schwenja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14 APR 2004 by ThomasVJ>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by schwenja>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: <DBA CORRECTED> gwr 970925
Subject: IOWA IOGA TRADE MISSION
TAGS: BEXP, SF
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006